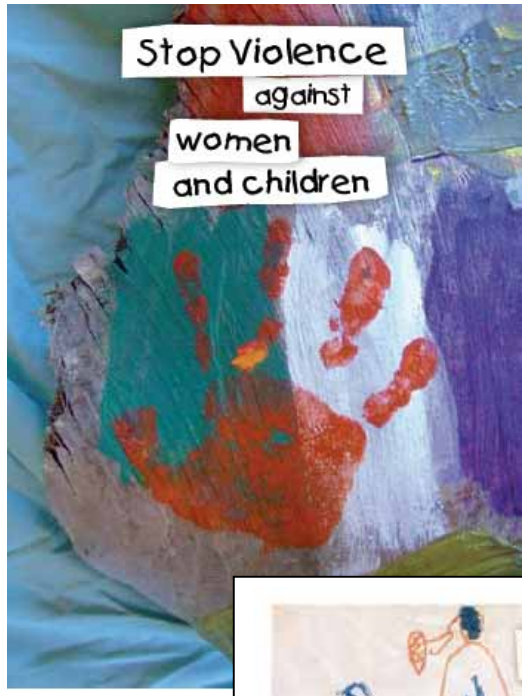


Stop Violence
against
women
and children

Through Young People's Eyes

Children and young people's experiences of domestic and family violence



"Sometimes I pretend that I am happy when really I am feeling sad..."



"my dad punched my mum ... my dad punched me as well"

"It made me and mum really scared"



"We walked over a big hill and got to a new house, then we had to leave there and go over another big hill until we got to another house ..."



"The little girl is crying because she had to change schools and leave all of her friends."

SAD
HAPPY

These are



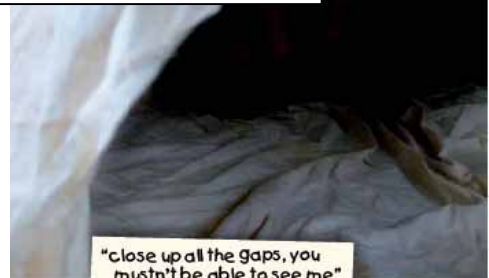
"I wish..."

"I wish I could fly so I could see above everything and get away."

"If I chose to be an animal I'd be a giraffe because it has long legs and can run fast."

"I would like to be a turtle because it has a shell to protect it."

the violence would stop"



"close up all the gaps, you musn't be able to see me"

Project facilitators:
Nicole Leggett - WCDFVS
Georgi Stone - Expressive Arts Therapist

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funding from the Body Shop

A partnership between Women's Council for
Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) and
Warrawee Women's Refuge

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Domestic and Family Violence and Children

In Australia one in four children and young people grow up in violent and abusive homes (Indermaur, 2001) with research indicating that anywhere between 75000 and 640 000 children are exposed to domestic and family violence in Australia and as many as 275 million children world wide (Unicef & Body Shop, 2006).

For many children and young people exposure to domestic and family violence is an extremely traumatising experience that can lead to: injury, stress, fear, depression, anxiety, withdrawal and developmental regression (to name just a few). In fact recent research has demonstrated that exposure to violence during childhood can also impact upon children's brain development affecting brain 'wiring', development and size (for a comprehensive review see Perry, 2000 'The neurodevelopmental costs of adverse childhood events' The Child Trauma Academy). In short, this research suggests that children who grow up in homes where there is severe neglect and/or violence are often not provided with the range of stimulus and input that a child raised in a healthy environment may receive. For example, a woman/mother who is being frequently and severely physically and emotionally abused by her partner is likely to be traumatised and at times physically incapacitated. In doing this, the perpetrator limits that mothers ability to positively engage with her child e.g. reading, talking, arts, drawing and playing, and if social isolation is also a feature of the abuse also limits that child's engagement with adults outside of the immediate family. For many, it may seem that these 'secondary consequences' of domestic and family violence are not that important however it is these experiences and events that are integral to a child's developing fine and gross motor coordination, cognitive development and emotional regulation. And, in their absence, children's brains are not provided with the 'experiences' that are vital for the promotion of healthy growth and development. Indeed, comparisons of a healthy three year olds brain compared to the brain of a three year old who has experienced severe trauma (violence and neglect) demonstrate that the brain of the abused child is significantly smaller and that the ventricles are under-developed (see picture below). These images are indeed horrifying and demonstrate the critical importance of keeping women and children safe from domestic and family violence.



©Perry (2007)

The impact of trauma on children and young peoples developing brains can have significant and lifelong implications for health and wellbeing. Including:

- Loss of ability to process experience through language

- Diminished or lost capacity for empathy

- Hypersensitivity to trauma in others

- Diminished emotional range

- Loss of capacity for joy

- Feelings of worthlessness and joy

- Difficulty regulating emotions such as rage/anger, shame, stress

- Difficulty with impulse control

- Internalise the trauma as a representation that they are at fault/bad/to blame, and that no-one can be trusted (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2007)

In turn, these processes can detrimentally impact upon young peoples' social skills and social relationships, behaviour (what traumatised young people see as 'solutions' adults often see as problems e.g. self-harming, risky behaviour), emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. children exposed to violence can be more vulnerable to experiencing a mental illness in later life), education and academic success, employment, and the health of future relationships. Indeed, research suggests that children and young people exposed to domestic and family violence are one and a half times more likely to become involved in an abusive relationship, either as the victim or the perpetrator, when they are adults (Indermaur, 2001). Similarly, research has also identified that children who are abused are at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems, substance abuse and are also more likely to be incarcerated during adulthood (compared to adults who did not experience abuse as children) (Australian Childhood Foundation).

The significant and lifelong impacts that domestic and family violence can have on children from a very young age contradicts traditional conceptions of the child as a passive or 'silent witness' to domestic and family violence. This idea that children are secondary and/or not affected by domestic abuse is also evident in the knowledge held within the general community about the rate of child abuse in Australia and the impacts of violence on children. For example, research conducted by Tucci, Mitchell and Goddard (2003 and 2006) interviewed adults to obtain insight into the degree to which child abuse¹ is considered a community concern. Results of this study found that in both 2003 and when the study was replicated in 2006 a significant proportion of respondents believed that child abuse inflicted by parents is to some degree acceptable with one in ten people indicating that parents should not be charged with sexual assault if they abuse their children (an additional 6% were unsure) and 17% of respondents indicating that they did not believe parents who caused an injury to their child during an act of discipline should be charged with assault. These findings demonstrate a lack of understanding about what constitutes child abuse which was also evident in the studies finding that on average respondents estimated that there were about 20,000 reports of child abuse nationally per year (when in actual fact there are over 200,000). In addition, the study found that 35% of respondents believed that children make up stories about being abused. This is another very

¹ Under WA legislation witnessing domestic and family violence is considered to be a form of child abuse

concerning finding considering that thousands of children are abused in Australia every year, victims who in many respects may rely on community members (teachers, day care centre staff, sports/athletics coaches, nurses, neighbours etc.) to act on their disclosures to facilitate support and intervention to their situation. This research indicates that as many as one in three adults might dismiss a child's disclosure of abuse thinking that the child was simply making the story up.

These findings demonstrate that there is dire need within the community to raise the profile of domestic and family violence and child abuse, to inform the public about the rate of violence and abuse that occurs within many Australian homes and the impacts that this experience can have on a developing child or young person. By raising awareness about domestic and family violence and its impact upon children we can hopefully improve people's ability to handle a disclosure (and respond appropriately), understand how a child may be affected by domestic and family violence, and normalise the emotional turmoil that is often experienced by children who have grown up witnessing violence. In line with this identified need 'Through Young People's Eyes' aims to raise awareness about the impact of domestic and family violence from the perspective of children and young people. A more detailed explanation of the project is included in the program description.

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Through Young Peoples' Eyes: Program description

AIM

Funded by the Body Shop, 'Through Young People's Eyes' aimed to engage children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence to develop a post-card resource that raises awareness about their experiences and the impact of violence on children and young people. However, in recognition of the fact that witnessing violence as a child or young person can be an extremely traumatic experience the primary goal of the project was to help the participants 'accommodate' their experience of violence and progress in their healing journey.

METHOD

To achieve both of these goals an Expressive Arts Therapy program was run for children between the ages of 5-11. The program, which incorporated elements of music, movement, dance, drawing, painting and clay work, was run over a three week period with participants attending two sessions per week for two and a half hours each time.

Expressive Arts Therapy was chosen as the medium for the present project due to the numerous therapeutic benefits of this approach (see definition of this approach and therapeutic benefits detailed on the following page). Just a few of these benefits are that participants do not have to verbalise or overtly discuss the things that they have seen and how it has made them feel but rather can use alternative forms of expression to describe and explain their experience. As a result this approach is safer and less confronting and also enables participants to express themselves in their own way rather than use the jargon or language that bounds descriptions of experience. A further advantage of this approach is that it operates from the philosophy that all children are different and may prefer or enjoy different modes of expression, meaning that there is greater likelihood that each child at some point during the group program may find an activity that they particularly enjoy or excel at thereby facilitating gains in self-confidence. Similarly it provides children with an opportunity to experience a number of different artistic and creative ways of working, and stimuli/experiences that are beneficial to the brain development of all children particularly those who have witnessed domestic and family violence.

In order to facilitate development of the postcards photos of participant's artwork were taken throughout the program (with their permission) and quotes or descriptions of participants' experiences were collected. At the end of the program different images were selected in consultation with the children who participated in the expressive arts program, the Child Support Worker at Warrawee Women's Refuge and the Expressive Arts Therapist. These images were then used to develop eight post cards that aim to provide insight into the experience of domestic and family violence from a child or young persons' perspective. 2000 copies of the postcards were printed and have been disseminated to Refuges, children's counselling services, and other children's and youth services across WA.

What is Expressive Arts Therapy?

Expressive Arts Therapy combines techniques from a number of psychotherapy-based arts therapies including dramatherapy (with components of psychodrama, role play, improvisation, puppetry, and playback theatre), dance and movement therapy, art therapy and sound healing. It presents a multi-modal approach providing structured opportunity for participants to explore intuitive processes, access conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche, and self-reflect through expression in a range of arts media.

The potential *benefits* and *psychological outcomes* of Expressive Arts Therapy are far-reaching.

The psychotherapeutic principles encourage exploration and analysis of emotion, memories, experience and intradynamics which may not be easily accessed and understood by the conscious mind while nonetheless impacting on personality, behaviour patterns, health, and quality of life experience. This is particularly relevant for people who have experienced trauma, shock, physical and emotional crisis, prolonged medication, substance abuse, locked emotional or behaviour patterns, or ongoing powerlessness.

The creative and artistic modes of expression provided in the workshops offer a component of choice and emotional safety, giving opportunity for participants to explore and express literally, metaphorically or symbolically. In doing so, participants are likely to explore deeper into difficult, repressed, or unconscious issues affecting their lives, thereby promoting insight, resolution, validation, and self-growth. Intuitively guided creativity, by bypassing the dominant intellectual and rationalizing processes of the mind and its prescribed expectations, can effectively tap into unconscious processes harnessed to provide profound self-reflection, insight, and understanding.

The range of artistic modes of expression presented in Expressive Arts Therapy offer response to the range of learning and experiential preferences present throughout the population and cross-culturally. This includes verbal, kinesthetic, visual, auditory, and literary channels, and ensures participants are able to resonate with expressive modes they are most capable and comfortable to access and express their inner experiences. This is of particular benefit when considering intellectual and articulate restrictions representative of age, culture, physical and mental ability, or trauma, offering a spectrum of alternative and appropriate modes of expression.

Creative Expression in itself has long been known to improve well-being, and combined with personal processes has the potential for valuable self-acknowledgement and psychoanalysis.

The outcome products of the workshops can provide anchorage for continued healing, self-reflection, analysis and resolution as tangible documentation of a dynamic personal process. The artworks themselves can become an ongoing personal resource by acting as a focus or key into previous processes and thereby encourage further self-development.

The groupwork nature of the workshops and its inherent interdynamics through group sharing and interaction provides participants with supportive “witness” to each other, a term used in therapeutic context to define a process of authentication inspired by group reflection, insight, shared identification, acceptance and validation.

Expressive Arts Therapist: Georgi Stone

Having graduated from Murdoch University in 1977 with a BA in Psychology, I trained and specialised in working with survivors of sexual and domestic/family violence for fifteen years, incorporating counseling and innovative arts therapies. Further employment has included counseling people with HIV/AIDS, working with youth, coordinating community arts projects, and developing social research and consultancy for the management of community services. Employment in social research for the PADV-funded “Kids and DV” project in 1999 inspired me to seek further experience and training in psychotherapy-based schools of arts therapy. In 2003, I participated in a dance therapy project titled “Moving Stories for Women” and in 2004 I completed a Post-graduate Diploma in Dramatherapy at Edith Cowan University. I have incorporated these skills together with experience in art therapy, sound healing, and ritual to embark on a business career designing and facilitating workshop programs in the community that utilize a range of techniques from the expressive arts therapies, specifically in the medium of drama, movement, dance, role play, art, sound, and ritual.



Georgi Stone

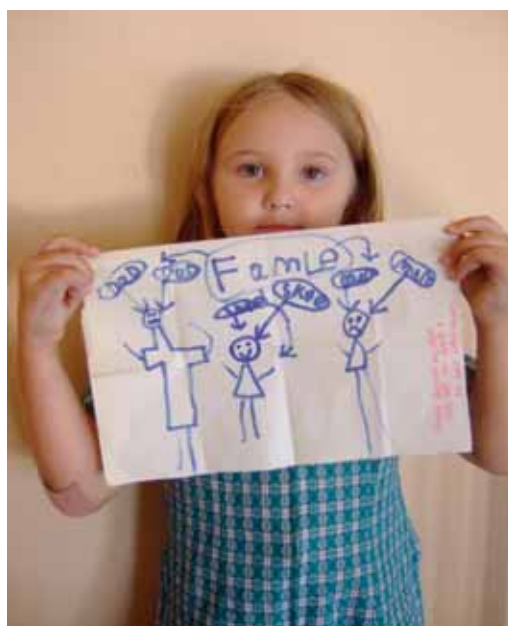
Expressive Arts Therapist

Tel: 08 9337 6413 georgistone@ozemail.com.au

The Expressive Arts Therapy Program

Participants

Four girls between the ages of 5-11 participated in the Expressive Arts Therapy program. Participants were recruited for the present project via Warrawee Women's Refuge and the City of Fremantle outreach program.



Workshop outline

Intro Session

Objective:

*To introduce the members of the group
To provide parents with information
regarding the program, and
To explore the expressive capabilities
and dynamic of the group as insight to
group work planning and structure*

Participants and parents introduced themselves with name gestures expressed through body movement with group paraphrase, then participated in a ball game of introduction. They then engaged in free-form movement as an animal of choice, developing this into interactive dialogue. Sound-work then followed using percussion instruments in individual then interactive exercises, forming "sound dialogues". The group closed with feeling gestures. In this session the facilitator was able to gauge participants' comprehension of abstract concepts, comfort with various expressive modes, confidence in group participation, operational engagement (physical, intellectual, emotional etc.) and group dynamics.



Session 1: PHYSICAL - the Seen Self

Objective: To develop a sense of shape and physical form as it relates to the individual self within a physical environment, and express this through landscape and sculptural works.

In this workshop, participants danced freeform to music, varying the mode and pace of their physical expression. They were then encouraged to visualise and "move inside" different shapes and to pick from a selection of boxes and baskets to draw that shape with colours and textures. With the choice to utilise the shapes, participants were further invited to construct a landscape containing the self, using clay and the addition of bush material and fabrics.

Moving inside different shapes



Using clay to create 'self' within landscapes



Session 2: EMOTIONAL - the Core Self

Emotional shields

Objective: To safely explore stored emotions, and express them through words, drawing and painting.

In this workshop, participants intuitively selected from an array of postcards and described why they were attracted to them and what feelings they evoked. They were then asked to move around a table, stopping when the music stopped, and writing or drawing their association with the "emotion box" (boxes variously labeled with HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY, LONELY, PEACEFUL or SCARED) then placing this in the box. Individual support was given to share descriptions, stories or emotions if the participant needed and wished to do so. Participants then painted large palm-bark sheaths to make into protective "emotion shields" to take home.



Emotion boxes



Session3: SOCIAL - the Interactive Self



Self-portrait

Objective: To develop external characters through dress-up, performance and interactive play, thus expressing inner aspects of the self.



Character development



In this workshop, participants initially engaged in finger puppetry and improvisation with plastic animals to familiarise with skills in story-telling interactive dialogue, and character development. They then utilised costume and dress-ups to present characters in a catwalk performance. Participants also

created self-portrait masks which could be incorporated in character performances.



Character development



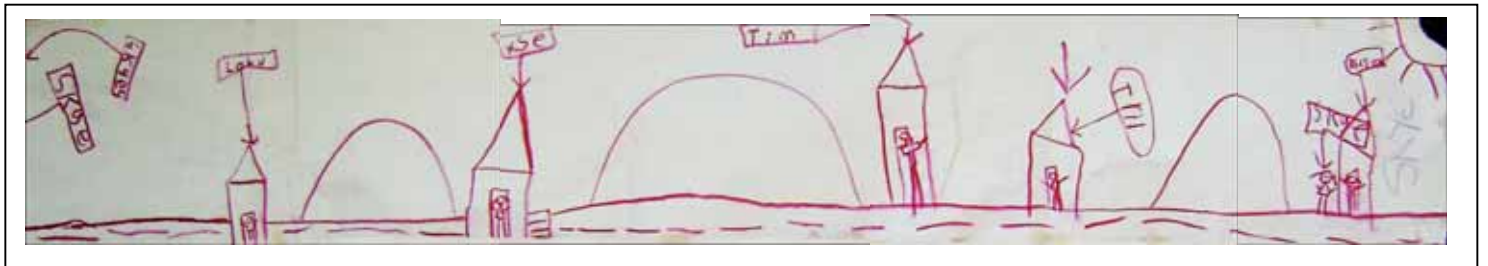
Story telling

Session 4: HISTORICAL - the Journeying Self

Objective: To map out landmarks in one's personal life journey, expressing these in imagery and storytelling.

Participants initially viewed a photo presentation of selected images of their work. Three sculptural pieces were then presented as inspiration for emotional landscapes, i.e. "inside a cup (or cave)", "on top of a mountain" and "inside a wave".

These were explored in improvisation, stories and drawing. Participants were then invited to map out their life journey on long lengths of butcher paper forming a "life scroll" and highlighting significant stories or "stepping stones".



Leaving home



Hiding/covered up



Changing schools



Footsteps to the future

Session 5: UNIVERSAL - the All-Powerful Self

Objective: To introduce concepts of Archetypes and Animal Totems as expressions of the self, and to develop in creative bushcraft.

Participants drew selected animals and were invited to express these in performance or movement. Participants were introduced to the Archetypes based on the Native American Medicine Wheel, of the Protector, the Teacher, the Healer, and the Artist, then developed self-expressive artworks in bushcraft options of clayworks, kajinas, stick wands or woven nests.



Drawing animals



Drawing animals



Clay and bushcraft



Making a wand



Clay work

Evaluation of the Expressive Arts Therapy

An evaluation was conducted to provide some insight into what the participants did and didn't like about the Expressive Arts Therapy course, and also to provide some indication/sense about whether the participants' involvement had indeed helped in their attempts to 'process' and accommodate their experience of domestic and family violence.

Method

To find out what participants thought about the expressive arts they were asked to participate in a brief one on one semi-structured interview during the last session. The format of the interview was such that the facilitator/s reflected on each workshop and asked participants to rate on a scale of 'smiley faces' how much they enjoyed it and to talk about what they remembered and what they liked or didn't like (see evaluation form attached as Appendix 1).

To obtain information from the parents about the participants' behaviour and progress outside of the expressive arts program a less formal approach was adopted, mainly involving informal conversations with the participants' mothers following each of the sessions when they came to pick the girls up.

Results

Participant feedback

As there was only a small number of participants who completed the program (n=4) providing an 'average' or generalisation of their impressions does not really provide valid or useful feedback. Instead a brief summary of each participants comments are provided below. Presenting each participant's feedback individually values each child's opinion and respects the diversity of interests, personalities and temperaments that were evident within the group.

'K' participant one: 'K' really enjoyed the clay work in session one, the puppetry and dressing up during session three, creating life journeys on the butchers paper in session four and the basket making in the last session. However, she did not very much enjoy the 'emotion boxes' during session two (the activity that involved participants drawing different emotions) this was quite confronting and upsetting, 'K' also did not enjoy very much the introductory session because the other girls mums were there and her mum couldn't make it.

'S' participant two: 'S' really liked the introductory session particularly dancing and performing with the rattler, she also really like session two creating the emotional shields and drawing the emotions and session five creating the wand and the basket. 'S' indicated that she enjoyed session one (shapes and clay work) - that it was really fun - but that she got a bit messy (which she didn't like), also 'S' indicated again that she enjoyed session three (puppetry and performing) but that she felt a bit shy doing some of the activities. Finally, 'S' said that she liked the

drawing during session 4 (the life journeys) but that she was getting frustrated with her writing skills as she wanted to add words and descriptions to her journey but found this hard to do.

'SK' participant three: 'SK' indicated that she really enjoyed all of the Expressive Arts Therapy sessions that she attended ('SK' missed session one due to a pre-arranged counselling appointment) describing the activities as 'happy', 'cool' and really fun. 'SK' indicated that she did not enjoy the 'get to know you' session at the beginning as much as the rest of the program because she didn't know anyone and hadn't made any friends yet.

Feedback from parents

Feedback was obtained from all of the participants' parents at different times during the program. All parents agreed that their children had very much enjoyed the Expressive Arts Therapy program. One parent indicated that her daughter had been happier and more vibrant since attending the program. Another parent indicated that since her daughters participation in the Expressive Arts Therapy she had observed a number of very positive changes in her behaviour including that she was calmer at home, sleeping better (her nightmares had stopped), that she was very proud of the art work that she produced particularly the emotional shield, and that she was less resistant and argumentative with her mother and more understanding.

Reflections about the project from the facilitators:

Positive aspects:

- Participant enthusiasm and creative zeal

- Parent enthusiasm, support and positive feedback

- Having two facilitators

- Supportive network already existing for referred participants - attention given to the necessity for follow-up processes

- Neutrality of the space and the program, plus two facilitator roles, seemed to promote emotional safety for individual expression

- Physical space was adequate in size and a friendly non-toxic environment. Using the stage for one workshop was a novel bonus.

- Including photography of the artworks as they were created became an unexpected necessity, as creative forms were manifest and destroyed, reformed and reworked at a rapid pace. This was appropriate and reflective of intuitive processes in action without heavy thought to outcome or preservation, and in tune with the free flow of inner expression... a challenge to keep up but a very positive sign!

- Documentation, postcard outcome, and proposed exhibition of works furthering community education.

- Two and a half hours - spot on for time (any longer would probably have been too long)

- Consistency of the programs timetabling was important also the continuity with facilitators

- Engaging parents at the beginning and end of the program and providing informal parental debrief following each session was important

- Program could have kept going for longer

Challenging aspects:

Punctuality of participant group (reliant on parent or worker transport)

Age range spanning 4 or 5 years - challenging to engage everyone fully in the same activity and for the same length of time... workshop required a high level of individual attention to participants at times to meet expressive age-related needs and focus. (This was accomplished because of the relatively small size of the group and the presence of a co-facilitator role.) Also, a younger-than-expected age range required considerable adaptation (and compromise) of the program.

Carpeted space - needing to be mindful of staining from art materials

Previous interactive dynamics between some participants affecting group dynamic and engagement.

While photography became an important medium of documentation in the project, it was at times difficult to juggle with other facilitation tasks, to remain as non-intrusive as possible, to distribute without apparent favour of one over another, to avoid distraction, and to manage technicalities for light, movement and close-up.

Some hyperactivity of participants at times upon arrival.

Some hyper-anticipation towards provided snacks

Suggestions:

Group could have been bigger, up to 8 participants if not too extensive an age range - this would encourage more diverse group interaction and inspiration. Sometimes too intimate a group inherits intimate dynamics and too little anonymity.

The initial introductory session welcomed parents and caregivers to join in and develop an understanding of the workshops. I think this could be further encouraged so parents and caregivers had insight into how they could be supportive and also so they do not feel apprehensive or left-out.

Dustsheets for floor cover, and art-shirts/old clothes for participants.

May be advisable for snacks to only be of the healthiest kind except perhaps a sweeter treat at the end of the program.

Availability of a movie camera to document movement and performance as well as visual art.

Conclusions

Different activities/stimulus was important for this group as they all demonstrated different interests, strengths, and dislikes. For these reasons the program provided each child an opportunity to excel in different activities and also an opportunity to move in and out of their comfort zones participating in new and different tasks.

Creating the Postcards

The postcards that were created were informed entirely by the participants in the Expressive Arts Therapy, the facilitators and the child support worker at Warrawee Women's Refuge.

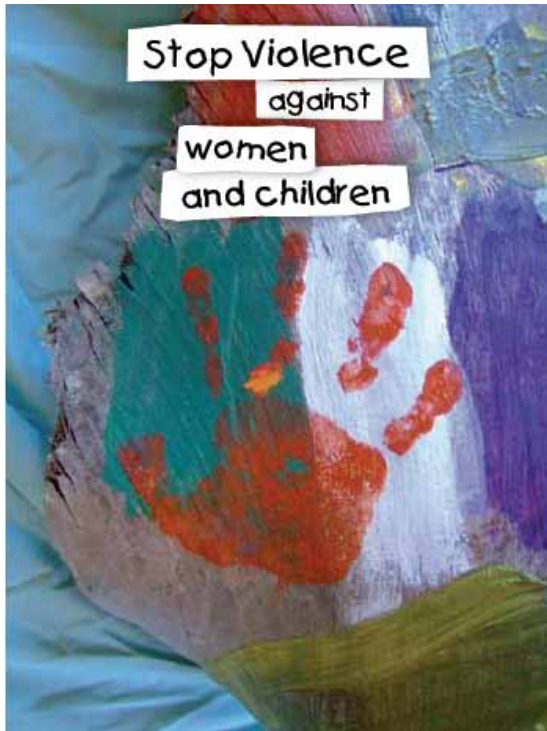
As mentioned earlier photographs were taken throughout the Expressive Arts Therapy program. Initially there was some concern that this might inhibit participants creation and imagination however if anything it seemed to have quite the opposite impact with participants enthusiastically creating, adding to, and recreating new works to be photographed. It is thought that the use of photography during the program may have in fact added an additional element of validation (that they created something beautiful/creative/important) and positive reinforcement for the participants.

In addition to the photography the facilitators also engaged participants in discussion about the images, movements and stories that they created. Where relevant and appropriate the quotes and descriptions were recorded to accompany/explain different images or activities.

Once the Expressive Arts Therapy program was completed and the images and quotes had been compiled the project facilitators embarked on a consultation process to determine which images should be developed as postcards. In doing so the facilitators worked with each other, drew upon research and consulted with two of the participants from the Expressive Arts Therapy to discuss which images would best be able to raise awareness about the impact of domestic and family violence on children and young people and what the important themes or messages were that should be conveyed. Once the images were selected they were collated around eight different themes including: 'Stop! violence against women and children', emotional, scared, confused, hiding, masks and secrets, escape, and 'I wish...'. The information to accompany each theme and post-card was then developed as well as the general format and layout.

Once the draft postcards were developed they were finalised and printed by a graphic designer.

Post Cards Final Product



Through Young People's Eyes

Stop Violence Against Women and Children!

In Australia one in four children and young people witness their mother, sister, aunt or grandmother get beaten, yelled at, manipulated and controlled by a partner or loved one. (Indonaur, 2001).

No woman deserves to experience this and no child deserves to be subjected to it.

All children have the right to grow up in happy, healthy, safe homes free from domestic and family violence.

If you want advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 9028 1666
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 9429 7264
 Crisis Care 9223 1111

Artworks displayed in these postcards were the outcome of Expressive Arts Therapy workshops conducted with young people who have witnessed domestic and family violence. The project was facilitated by Expressive Arts Therapist Georgi Stone, © Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence (Australia) 2014

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Through Young People's Eyes

Hiding

Growing up in homes where there is domestic and family violence can be very scary and upsetting.

To get away lots of kids hide or go to safe places in their rooms like cupboards, toilets, wardrobes and under the bed. Sometimes mum or one of the other kids might come and hide with them as well.

If you want advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 9028 1666
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 9429 7264
 Crisis Care 9223 1111

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Through Young People's Eyes

Scared

Heart pounding
Tight chest
Skin prickles
Worried
Anxious
Uncertain

For most of us, our homes are a safe haven, but for kids who grow up with domestic and family violence being at home can be isolating, stressful and terrifying.

If you need advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 9028 1888
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 9420 7264
 Crisis Care 9023 1111

Artworks displayed in these postcards were the outcome of Expressive Arts Therapy workshops conducted with young people who have witnessed domestic and family violence. The project was facilitated by Expressive Arts Therapist Georgi Stone.
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Through Young People's Eyes

Emotional

Sad, happy, scared, angry, frustrated, love, hate, confused, worried, anxious, stressed, exhausted, wanting it to stop ...

These are just some of the emotions that a child growing up with domestic and family violence might experience on a daily basis.

If you need advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 9028 1888
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 9420 7264
 Crisis Care 9023 1111

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Through Young People's Eyes

Confused

Domestic and family violence can be extremely confusing for kids, particularly when the perpetrator is a family member or loved one.

Many young people:

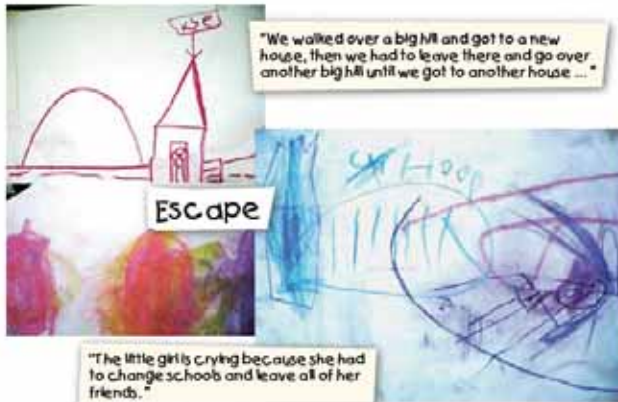
- Wonder if violence is normal?
- Internalise the blame thinking the violence is their fault
- Question how dad can keep hurting, even once though he says he loves her?
- Resent mum for staying or going back
- Feel guilty for loving dad... feel guilty for not loving dad
- Feel scared the family will break up... feel scared that their will be more hurt if the family stays together

If you need advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 9028 1888
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 9420 7264
 Crisis Care 9023 1111

Artworks displayed in these postcards were the outcome of Expressive Arts Therapy workshops conducted with young people who have witnessed domestic and family violence. The project was facilitated by Expressive Arts Therapist Georgi Stone.
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Through Young People's Eyes

Escape

For many kids escaping domestic and family violence means leaving their home and changing schools. Many children do not want to go as for them leaving friends, pets, and familiar surroundings can be very upsetting ...

The reason they have to leave is because perpetrators of domestic and family violence rarely stop their abusive behaviour even after separation, in fact violence often intensifies following a relationship split. This means that it is not safe for children and children to remain in a location that is 'known' to the perpetrator.

If you want advice, information or support you can contact:
 Patricia Giles Centre Children's Counselling Service 8028 1888
 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 8420 7264
 Crisis Care 8223 1111

Artworks displayed in these postcards were the outcome of Expressive Arts Therapy workshops conducted with young people who have addressed domestic and family violence. The project was facilitated by Expressive Arts Therapist Georgi Stone.
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Through Young People's Eyes

I wish the violence would stop ...

It is truly sad to think that for many Australian children their dreams and hopes are occupied with ways that they can best escape domestic and family violence.

No woman or child wants or deserves to be abused.

All women and children have the right to live in safe, healthy and happy homes.

If you want advice, information or support you can contact:
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Through Young People's Eyes

Masks and Secrets

Children who grow up with domestic and family violence are often told that they can't tell anyone about what is going on, that it is a family secret...

No child should ever have to hide their true feelings or to keep secrets to protect an abusive family member.

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 Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence 8420 7264
 Crisis Care 8223 1111

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Raising Awareness about the Impact of Domestic and Family Violence on Children and Young People

Post-card dissemination

Five hundred copies of each post-card were printed (totaling 4000 postcards). Copies of each were sent to all of the Refuges across the state and the Women's Councils' member services (total of 50 organisations).

In addition to the Refuge and domestic violence service mail-out a letter was sent to children and youth services to ask them if they would be interested in receiving copies of the postcards. The reason that this approach was taken was to ensure that the resources were sent to interested parties only (e.g. to prevent them from gathering dust on a shelf or worse being placed in the bin).

One hundred copies of the postcards were also sent to the Body Shop for distribution and display in their stores.

Gallery exhibition and project launch

As there were many wonderful images and pieces of artwork created during the Expressive Arts Therapy program that were not included on the postcards it was decided that a gallery exhibition would be held to provide an opportunity to showcase the wonderful work developed by the young people involved in this project. It was also thought that a community based gallery exhibition would provide another avenue for raising awareness about the impact of domestic and family violence on children and young people.

The exhibition will be held during the 16 Days of Activism in November so as to gather as much publicity as possible and hopefully as a result, high levels of community participation.

Project promotion

A press release about the project was developed for Fremantle local paper (see Appendix 2). Articles will also be written for the Australian and Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and 'Kids First' WA's child protection magazine.

Information about the postcards will also be sent out on various networks including Winfo (run by Women's Policy Office - Department of Communities) and the Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) e-newsletter.

Appendix One

Through Young Peoples Eyes: Expressive Arts Therapy

Introductory session:

Participants and parents introduced themselves with name gestures expressed through body movement with group paraphrase, then participated in a ball game of introduction. They then engaged in free-form movement as an animal of choice, developing this into interactive dialogue. Sound work then followed using percussion instruments in individual then interactive exercises, forming "sound dialogues". The group closed with feeling gestures.



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Session 1: Physical – The Seen Self

Participants danced freeform to music, varying the mode and pace of their physical expression. They were then encouraged to visualise and "move inside" different shapes and to pick from a selection of boxes and baskets to draw that shape with colours and textures. With the choice to utilise the shapes, participants were further invited to construct a landscape containing the self, using clay and the addition of bush material and fabrics.



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Session 2: Emotional – The Core Self

Participants intuitively selected from an array of postcards and described why they were attracted to them and what feelings they evoked. They were then asked to move around a table, stopping when the music stopped, and writing or drawing their association with the "emotion box" (boxes variously labeled with HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY, LONELY, PEACEFUL or SCARED) then placing this in the box. Individual support was given to share descriptions, stories or emotions if the participant needed and wished to do so. Participants then painted large palm-bark sheaths to make into protective "emotion shields" to take home.



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Session 3: Social – The Interactive Self

Participants initially engaged in finger puppetry and improvisation with plastic animals to familiarise with skills in story-telling interactive dialogue, and character development. They then utilised costume and dress-ups to present characters in a catwalk performance. Participants also created self-portrait masks which could be incorporated in character performances.



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Session 4: Historical – The Journeying Self

Participants initially viewed a photo presentation of selected images of their work. Three sculptural pieces were then presented as inspiration for emotional landscapes, i.e. "inside a cup (or cave)", "on top of a mountain" and "inside a wave". These were explored in improvisation, stories and drawing. Participants were then invited to map out their life journey on long lengths of butcher paper forming a "life scroll" and highlighting significant stories or "stepping stones"..



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Session 5: Universal – All Powerful Self

Includes animal totems, four Archetypal figures, and the making of bush baskets and kajinas



What did you like?

What did you dislike?

Parental Comments/Feedback

Possible prompts:

Feedback from child about program

Change in behaviour

Dynamic/relationship in the home

Other comments

Appendix Two

PRESS RELEASE

When it's hard to be heard, pictures may speak louder than words. In a recent project "Through Young People's Eyes", children from Warrawee Women's Refuge and the City of Fremantle Outreach Program participated in activities in self-expression through art, drama and movement. The children aged between 5 and 11, have all witnessed domestic or family violence. Their images reflect the confusion, grief, fear and sense of betrayal they are often unable to voice. "For many of these children, silence is a survival strategy, so to have safe opportunity to open their hearts and tangibly express their emotions is truly precious and empowering", says workshop facilitator and Expressive Arts Therapist Georgi Stone.

The project, funded by The Body Shop and administered by The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) has also produced a series of postcards depicting images created by the children during the Expressive Arts Therapy workshops. The postcards aim to provide insight into children and young people's experience of domestic and family violence, something that Women's Council project officer Nicole Leggett says "is very important considering that one in four Australian children grow up witnessing domestic abuse". An exhibition of the children's art images and sculpture is also planned for later in the year.

If you are interested in receiving copies of the postcards please contact Nicole Leggett at the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) on 9420 7264 or student@womenscouncil.com.au